

Message Text

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PAGE 01 USUN N 05456 200103Z

21

ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /103 W

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R 192243Z NOV 76

FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 934

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 5456

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, IN, BG, UNGA

SUBJECT: FARAKKA BARRAGE ITEM--TALK WITH INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY
MEHTA

1. INDIAN FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA, ACCOMPANIED BY MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS JOINT SECRETARY N.P. JAIN, CALLED UPON
GOVERNOR SCRANTON NOVEMBER 17 AT THEIR REQUEST. FONSEC
METHA'S PURPOSE WAS TO ENSURE THAT THE NUANCES OF THE
INDIAN POSITION ON THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ISSUE IN
THE UNGA ARE CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD. IN A LOW-KEY AND
CLEAR PRESENTATION, MEHTA REITERATED INIDA'S VIEWPOINT,
STRESSING:

- THE ISSE IS AN ENGINEERING PROBLEM, NOT POLITICAL.
INDIA FEELS NO SENSE OF GUILT IN THIS AFFAIR;

- THERE IS A BASIC GANGES WATER SHORTAGE THIS YEAR
COMPARED WITH RECENT PREVIOUS YEARS, AND A DECISION MUST
BE REACHED AS TO HOW TO AUGMENT THE WATER SUPPLY. TO THIS
END, TALKS HAVE BEEN UNDERWAY WITH NEPAL ON WATER RESOURCES;

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PAGE 02 USUN N 05456 200103Z

- AT THE BARRAGE INDIA IS DRAWING ONLY THE AMOUNT

OF WATER TO WHICH IT IS LEGALLY ENTITLED;

-INDIA IS NOT BEHAVING IN THIS MATTER OUT OF
MALEVOLENCE TOWARDS BANGLADESH; THERE IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM
AT CALCUTTA;

- IT IS INCORRECT FOR BANGLADESH TO ALLEGE THAT THE
PROBLEM HAS BEEN DISCUSSED FOR 25 YEARS WITH INDIA.
BANGLADESH IS ADDING ANOTHER DIMENSION TO THE PROBLEM BY
TALKING IN THIS VEIN. BARRAGE CONSTRUCTION BEGAN IN 1961,
AND THE DACC AUTHORITIES KEPT INFORMED. UNTIL 2 YEARS
AGO (N.B.: THE FALL OF THE NUJIB GOVERNMENT), BANGLADESH
UNDERSTOOD THE WATER PROBLEM;

- INDIA SEES THE FARAKKA BARRAGE ONLY AS A BILATERAL
ISSUE. INDIA DOES NOT LIKE INSCRIPTION OF THE FARAKKA
BARRAGE ITEM ON THE UNGA AGENDA;

-IF THE INSCRIPTION IS "PUT OUT OF THE WAY, THEN
WE CAN TALK ABOUT THE PROBLEM".

- ANY MORAL PROESURE TO BE EXERTED ON INDIA MUST BE
DONE BY BANGLADESH "BEHIND CLOSED DOORS IN BILATERAL
DISCUSSIONS".

2. MEHTA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DURING THAT PAST FEW DAYS THE
INDIAN AND BANGLADESHI DELEGATIONS HAVE HELD TALKS
ABOUT THE BARRAGE ISSUE. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT OFFER ANY
OBSERVATIONS ON RESULTS.

3. GOVERNOR SCRANTON SAID THAT AS FAR AS THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED, WE CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN OUR
WELL KNOWN POSITION THAT THE FARAKKA QUESTION IS A
BILATERAL ISSUE, AND AT THIS TIME WE WOULD EXPECT TO
ABSTAIN IF THE BANGLADESH RESOLUTION COMES TO A VOTE IN
THE UN SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE. GOVERNOR SCRANTON
TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE TO THANK THE
INDIAN DELEGATION FOR ITS ACTIVE SUPPORT OF THE U.S. AND
SOVIET POSITION ON THE ENMOD RESOLUTIONS NOW BEFORE THE
FIRST COMMITTEE.

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PAGE 03 USUN N 05456 200103Z

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